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House Republicans and Democrats say the U.S. must maintain its troop totals in Europe

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR**
Associated Press

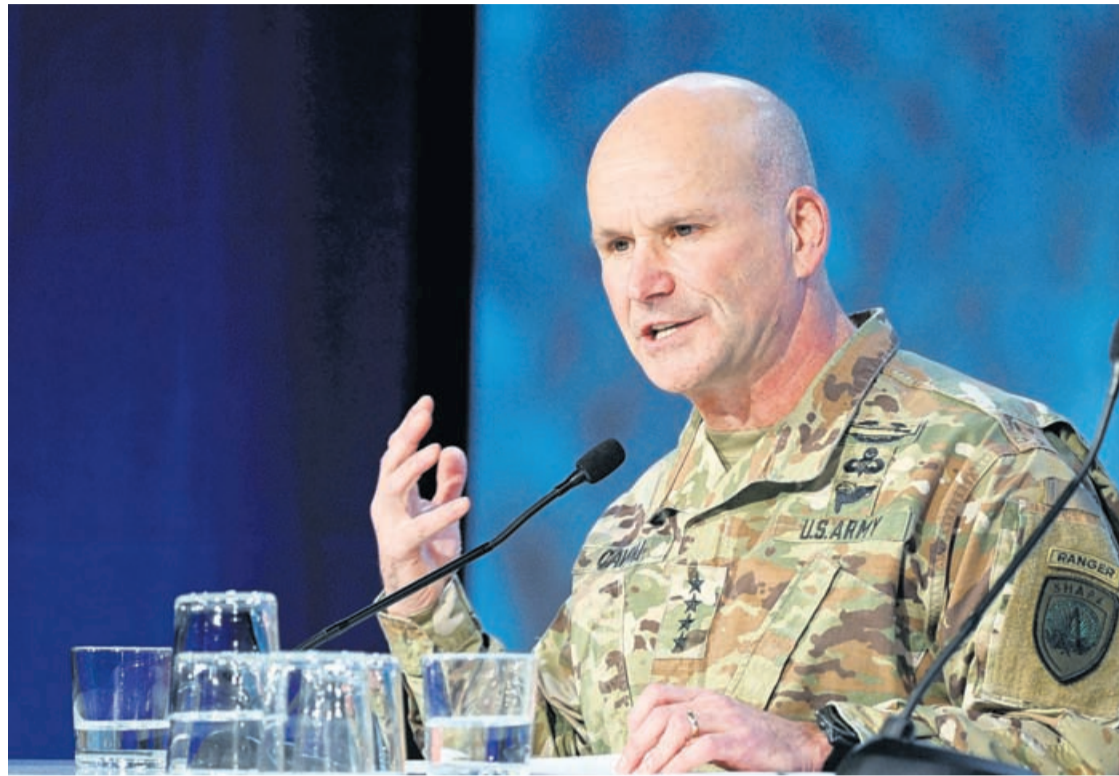
WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican and Democratic members of the House Armed Services Committee voiced sharp bipartisan criticism Tuesday about reports the Trump administration is eyeing a reduction of U.S. forces in Europe, saying America must stick with its NATO allies.

Rep. Michael Rogers, R-Mich., the panel's chairman, said the U.S. must not cut troop levels in Europe and added that he was opposed to any plan for the U.S. to relinquish NATO command. The U.S. historically has held the Supreme Allied Command Europe, or SACEUR, position.

"U.S. leadership in NATO is essential to ensure armed American forces, including our nuclear weapons, always remain under U.S. command," Rogers said at the start of a hearing with Army Gen. Christopher G. Cavoli, commander of U.S. European Command and the NATO commander.

Rep. Michael Turner, R-Ohio, added that "the idiocy of the fact that there was any discussion" about giving up the SACEUR role "is just beyond me."

Katherine Thompson, who is doing the job of assistant



U.S. Army Gen. Christopher G. Cavoli speaks during the annual Folk och Försvar Conference (Society and Defence Conference) in Salen, Sweden, Jan. 9, 2023.

Associated Press

defense secretary for international affairs, repeatedly told lawmakers that there is an ongoing Pentagon review of troop totals and no decisions have been made. But, asked again two hours into the hearing whether the U.S. would give up the SACEUR job, she said, "my definitive answer is no." That was the first time Pentagon officials have flatly denied the U.S. will give up that post, which Cavoli said gives him a

strong voice and American leadership at NATO.

There have been roughly 100,000 U.S. troops in Europe in recent years, a 20,000-troop increase since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Cavoli told the committee that he has recommended the U.S. maintain its current force totals. He said that cutting American troops in Europe will increase the time it would take America's military to respond to

any crisis there.

"Clearly moving things to the other side of the Atlantic increases the time-space challenge," he said. He added that the current size and capability of the U.S. force, aided by allied contributions, "is deterring Russia" right now.

Asked by Rep. Don Bacon, R-Ill., if the Trump administration is considering plans to pull two rotational brigades out of Europe, Cavoli said there is a constant

review of troop levels. He said the discussions generally revolve around readiness and modernization concerns by the military services.

Bacon responded that any reduction would be a grave mistake and a sign of American weakness.

Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., the committee's ranking Democrat, also urged ongoing U.S. support to Europe and Ukraine and criticized President Donald Trump, saying the Republican has empowered Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trump has pushed for an end to Russia's war in Ukraine but scaled back support for Ukraine when he came back into office. And he has said Europe must take responsibility for its own security.

Cavoli said that NATO allies "are investing in defense at a rate we haven't seen since the Cold War" and that there has been a 40% increase overall since the war in Ukraine began.

Thompson was chastised by Smith and other lawmakers for saying there is a ceasefire in Ukraine.

"There is no ceasefire. Let's just be clear about that," said Smith, adding that Russia's bombing continues. □

New offers for buyouts and early retirement offered to Homeland Security staff



Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem is recognized as President Donald Trump speaks during an event to announce new tariffs in the Rose Garden at the White House, Wednesday, April 2, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **REBECCA SANTANA**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Homeland Security is offering buyouts and early retirement options to staffers, as the Trump administration pushes forward with efforts to reduce and reshape the federal workforce, according to an email obtained by The Associated Press.

In the email, titled "Reshaping of the DHS Workforce," Secretary Kristi Noem said the department would give staffers who want to leave three options: deferred resignation, early retirement and a voluntary separation payment. The email, which was sent Monday night, said the last option offers a lump-sum payment of up to \$25,000 in some cases.

Staff have until April 14 to decide on whether to apply for the offer.

The Department of Homeland Security did not respond to questions about how many people are expected to take the offer or whether staff cuts would eventually follow.

"The American people deserve a government that works for them, something President Trump has promised," spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement. "Every dollar spent and position filled at DHS should be focused on our core mission of securing our homeland and keeping the American people safe."

Homeland Security has so far avoided the widespread, sweeping layoffs seen in other agencies across the federal government. □

AP wins reinstatement to White House events after judge rules government can't bar its journalists

By DAVID BAUDER
AP MEDIA WRITER

A federal judge ordered the White House on Tuesday to restore The Associated Press' full access to cover presidential events, ruling on a case that touched at the heart of the First Amendment and affirming that the government cannot punish the news organization for the content of its speech.

U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden, an appointee of President Donald Trump, ruled that the government can't retaliate against the AP's decision not to follow Trump's executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico. The decision handed the AP a major victory at a time the White House has been challenging the press on several levels.

"Under the First Amendment, if the Government opens its doors to some journalists be it to the Oval Office, the East Room, or elsewhere it cannot then shut those doors to other journalists because of their viewpoints," McFadden wrote. "The Constitution requires no less." It was unclear whether the White House would move immediately to put McFadden's ruling into effect. McFadden held off on implementing his order for a week, giving the government time to respond or appeal. The AP has been blocked since Feb. 11 from being among the small group of journalists to cover Trump in the Oval Office or aboard Air Force One, with sporadic ability to cover him at events in East Room.

The organization had asked McFadden to rule that Trump had violated AP's constitutional right to free speech by taking the action because he disagreed with the words that its journalists use. He had earlier declined AP's request to reverse the changes through an injunction.

Trump came out and said why he made the move. While there was little dispute in a March 27 court



White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt speaks with reporters in the James Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House, Tuesday, April 8, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

hearing about why Trump struck back at the AP the president said as much the administration said it was up to its own discretion, and not White House correspondents or longstanding tradition, to determine who gets to question the president and when.

Since the dispute with AP began, the White House has taken steps to control who gets to cover the president at smaller events and even where journalists sit during press secretary Karoline Leavitt's briefings, saying both need to better reflect changes in how people get information.

The AP's decisions on what terminology to use are followed by journalists and other writers around the world through its influential stylebook. The outlet said it would continue to use Gulf of Mexico, as the body of water has been known for hundreds of years, while also noting Trump's decision to rename it the Gulf of America. Different outlets have used different approaches, some skirting it by calling it the "Gulf."

"For anyone who thinks The Associated Press' lawsuit against President Trump's White House is about the name of a body of water, think bigger," Julie Pace, the AP's executive editor, wrote in a Wall Street Jour-

nal op-ed. "It's really about whether the government can control what you say." Trump has dismissed the AP, which was established in 1846, as a group of "radical left lunatics" and said that "we're going to keep them out until such time as they agree it's the Gulf of America."

Testimony revealed AP's coverage has been impeded. For a news organization that relies on speed as a major selling point, the AP brought its chief White House correspondent and photographer to testify before McFadden about how its absence from covering certain events has delayed its transmission of words and images. □

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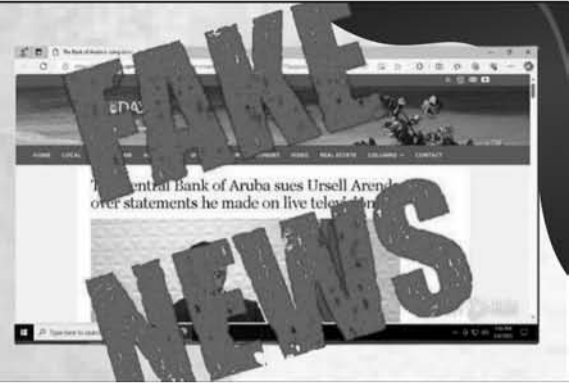
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Army to begin limited use of horse-drawn caissons for Arlington National Cemetery funerals

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army will soon begin limited use of horse-drawn caissons for funerals at Arlington National Cemetery, phasing in the long-held tradition after nearly two years of work to improve the care of the horses.

Starting June 2, the caissons will be used for two funerals per day, up to 10 per week, the Army said. The decision comes as the Army struggles to improve training, get better equipment and facilities and rebuild the stable of horses after two died in 2022 due to poor feed and living conditions.

"After careful consideration and coordination, we are pleased to reintegrate the caisson conveyance into funeral services at Arlington National Cemetery,



A U.S. Army Caisson team carries the remains of Army Pfc. Tramaine J. Billingsley during burial services at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., Nov. 2, 2010.

Associated Press

a solemn and revered tradition that honors our veterans and service members

as they are laid to rest," said Karen Durham-Aguilera, executive director of

the Office of Army Cemeteries and Army National Military Cemeteries.

The return of the caissons has been delayed several times. The Army suspended the use of the gray and black horses for the caissons in May 2023 to develop a program to improve the health and conditions of the herd. Two of the Old Guard platoon horses, Mickey and Tony, had to be euthanized within days of each other in February 2022. Both died of colon impaction. On Tuesday, Maj. Gen. Trevor Bredenkamp, commander of the Army Military District of Washington, told a small group of reporters that the Army has been working tirelessly with equine experts to buy horses and improve their veterinary care, training and equipment. He said the Army now has 46 horses and that 33 of those are in three squads that would be used for the caissons. □

New York City tolls that Trump wants to scrap are likely to remain through at least the summer

NEW YORK (AP) — New York's \$9 congestion toll on drivers entering the most traffic-snarled parts of Manhattan appears likely to remain through the summer and possibly into the fall as a lawsuit challenging the Trump administration's authority to end the program moves forward.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, who called the toll a "slap in the face to working class Americans and small business owners," had originally set a deadline of March 21 for the state to turn off the tolling program. When state officials refused, federal authorities set a new deadline of April 20. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul had said the

state intended to ignore that deadline, too.

Now, though, the two sides in the legal fight have de-

cided to slow things down. State and federal officials agreed to a briefing schedule for the lawsuit that al-

lows for court filings through the end of July, and possibly into October, according to a letter Friday to the federal judge overseeing the lawsuit. Federal officials also said they have no plans to seek an injunction that would stop the tolls while the lawsuit proceeds. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the regional transit agency, filed the lawsuit challenging Duffy's decision to rescind the toll's federal approval in February. Congestion pricing advocates say it's meant to deter drivers and relieve traffic backups while providing billions of dollars in new revenue to the city's transit system.

The U.S. Department of

Transportation did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Tuesday. The U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan, which represents Duffy in the lawsuit, declined to comment. The MTA also declined to comment, saying Friday's letter speaks for itself.

The fee started Jan. 5 on most drivers entering Manhattan neighborhoods south of Central Park. It comes on top of tolls drivers already pay to cross bridges and tunnels into Manhattan.

President Donald Trump, whose namesake Trump Tower and other properties are within the congestion zone, vowed to kill the plan as soon as he took office. □



Signs, including some advising drivers of congestion pricing tolls, are displayed near the exit of the Lincoln Tunnel in New York, Feb. 19, 2025.

Associated Press

U.S. defense secretary says China poses a threat to Panama Canal

By JUAN ZAMORANO

Associated Press

PANAMA CITY (AP) — U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth said Tuesday the Panama Canal faces on-going threats from China, but that together the U.S. and Panama will keep it secure.

Speaking at a ribbon cutting for a new U.S.-financed dock at the Vasco Nuñez de Balboa Naval Base after a meeting with Panama President José Raúl Mulino, Hegseth said the U.S. will not allow China or any other country to threaten the canal's operation.

"To this end, the United States and Panama have done more in recent weeks to strengthen our defense and security cooperation than we have in decades," he said.

Hegseth alluded to ports at either end of the canal that are controlled by a Hong Kong consortium, which is in the process of selling its controlling stake to another consortium including Black-Rock Inc.

"China-based companies continue to control critical infrastructure in the canal area," Hegseth said. "That gives China the potential to conduct surveillance activities across Panama. This



U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth speaks at Port of Rodman in West Panama, Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Associated Press

makes Panama and the United States less secure, less prosperous and less sovereign. And as President Donald Trump has pointed out, that situation is not acceptable."

Hegseth met with Mulino for two hours Tuesday morning before heading to the naval base that previously had been the U.S. Rodman Naval Station.

On the way, Hegseth posted a photo of the two men laughing to X and wrote

that it was an honor speaking with Mulino.

"You and your country's hard work is making a difference. Increased security cooperation will make both our nations safer, stronger and more prosperous," he wrote. The visit comes amid tensions over U.S. President Donald Trump's repeated assertions that the United States is being overcharged to use the Panama Canal and that China has influence over its operations.

Panama has denied those allegations.

After Hegseth and Mulino spoke by phone in February, the U.S. State Department published on X that an agreement had been reached to not charge U.S. warships to pass through the canal. Mulino publicly denied there was any such deal.

Trump has gone so far as to suggest the U.S. never should have turned the canal over to Panama and

that maybe the U.S. should take it back.

The China concern was provoked by the Hong Kong consortium holding a 25-year lease on ports at either end of the canal. The Panamanian government announced that lease was being audited and late Monday concluded that there were irregularities.

The Hong Kong consortium, however, has already announced that CK Hutchison would be selling its controlling stake in the ports to a consortium including Black-Rock Inc., effectively putting the ports under American control once the sale is complete.

Rubio told Mulino during his visit that Trump believed that China's presence in the canal area may violate a treaty that led the United States to turn the waterway over to Panama in 1999. That treaty calls for the permanent neutrality of the American-built canal. Mulino has denied that China has any influence in the operations of the canal. In February, he expressed frustration at the persistence of the narrative. "We aren't going to speak about what is not reality, but rather those issues that interest both countries." □

Congo repatriates 3 Americans who had faced death sentences over a failed coup plot

CHINEDU ASADU

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) —

The three Americans convicted of participating in a botched coup attempt in Congo last year have been repatriated to the United States, days after their death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment, Congo's presidency said Tuesday.

The three will serve out their life sentences in the U.S. following the repatriation done in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy, Congolese presidential spokesperson Tina Salama said. The presidency said the Americans left Tuesday morning. International law experts say it's unlikely the

U.S. will shorten their sentences.

The State Department said it was aware of their transfer into U.S. custody and referred questions to the Justice Department.

Among the three Americans was 21-year-old Marcel Malanga, son of opposition figure Christian Malanga, who led the foiled coup attempt that targeted the presidential palace in Kinshasa. The elder Malanga, who live-streamed from the palace during the attempt, was later killed while resisting arrest, Congolese authorities said. Marcel Malanga has said his father forced him to take part.

Also repatriated were Tyler Thompson Jr., 21, a friend of the younger Malanga who flew to Africa from Utah for what his family believed was a free vacation, and Benjamin Reuben Zalman-Polun, 36, who is reported to have known Christian Malanga through a gold mining company.

The news of their repatriation brought joy to their families.

Thompson's stepmother, Miranda Thompson, told The Associated Press that they didn't have all the details on the return "but we're so excited to have him on American soil again."

When the U.S. assumes

custody of prisoners convicted abroad, it typically agrees to carry out

the sentence of imprisonment designated by that country. □



Benjamin Reuben Zalman-Polun, left, Marcel Malanga and Tyler Thompson, all American citizens, attend a court verdict in Congo, Kinshasa, Friday, Sept. 13, 2024, on charges of taking part in a coup attempt in May 2024.

Associated Press

At least 44 dead and 160 injured in a roof collapse at a nightclub in the Dominican Republic

By **MARTÍN ADAMES AL-CÁNTARA** and **DÁNICA COTO**

Associated Press

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) —

At least 44 people died and 160 others were injured in the Dominican capital early Tuesday when the roof collapsed at an iconic nightclub where politicians, athletes and others were attending a merengue concert, authorities said.

Crews were searching for potential survivors in the rubble at the one-story Jet Set nightclub in Santo Domingo, said Juan Manuel Méndez, director of the Center of Emergency Operations.

"We presume that many of them are still alive, and that is why the authorities here will not give up until not a single person remains under that rubble," he said.

Nearly 12 hours after the top of the nightclub collapsed down onto patrons, rescue crews were still pulling out survivors from the debris. At the scene, firefighters removed blocks of broken concrete and sawed planks of wood to use them as planks to lift heavy debris as the noise of drills breaking through concrete filled the air.

The confirmed death toll



Rescue workers search for survivors at the Jet Set nightclub after its roof collapsed during a concert in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, early Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Associated Press

had reached 44, Méndez said in the early afternoon. Earlier, officials had said there were at least 160 people injured.

Nelsy Cruz, the governor of the northwestern province of Montecristi and sister of seven-time Major League Baseball All-Star Nelson Cruz, was among the victims. She had called President Luis Abinader at 12:49 a.m. saying she was trapped and that the roof had collapsed, First Lady Raquel Abraje told report-

ers. Officials said Cruz died later at the hospital.

"This is too great a tragedy," Abraje said in a broken voice.

The Professional Baseball League of the Dominican Republic posted on X that MLB pitcher Octavio Dotel died. Officials had earlier rescued Dotel from the debris and transported him to a hospital.

Meanwhile, the injured include legislator Bray Vargas and merengue singer Rubby Pérez, who was per-

forming when the roof collapsed, officials said.

His manager, Enrique Paulino, whose shirt was spattered with blood, told reporters at the scene that the concert began shortly before midnight, with the roof collapsing almost an hour later, killing the group's saxophonist.

"It happened so quickly. I managed to throw myself into a corner," he said, adding that he initially thought it was an earthquake.

It wasn't immediately clear

what caused the roof to collapse.

Jet Set issued a statement saying it was cooperating with authorities. "The loss of human life leaves us in a state of deep pain and dismay," it said.

It wasn't clear when the Jet Set building was last inspected.

A spokeswoman for the Ministry of Public Works told The Associated Press that all officials were on scene and not immediately available. She referred questions to the mayor's office. A spokesperson for the mayor's office could not be immediately reached for comment.

Prosecutor Rosalba Ramos told TV station CDN that while "everyone wants to know" what happened, authorities were still focused on finding survivors.

Manuel Olivo Ortiz, whose son attended the concert but did not return home, was among those anxiously waiting outside the club known for its traditional parties held on Monday where renowned national and international artists perform.

"We're holding on only to God," Olivo said.

Also awaiting word was Massiel Cuevas, godmother of 22-year-old Darlenys Batista. □

Ukraine's Zelenskyy says 2 Chinese were caught fighting alongside Russia

By **VASILISA STEPANENKO**

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) —

The Ukrainian military has captured two Chinese men fighting alongside the Rus-



In this photo taken from video distributed by Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, Russian 120mm mortar crew fire toward Ukrainian position at an undisclosed location in Ukraine.

Associated Press

sian army in the eastern Donetsk region and has information that "significantly more" are with Russian forces, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced Tuesday.

There was no immediate comment from China. Beijing is not known to have provided Russia with weapons or military expertise, and it was not clear whether the Chinese had joined the fight on their own initiative. Russia allows foreigners to enlist in its military, as does Ukraine.


Zelenskyy said he asked his top diplomat "to immediately contact Beijing." He

said China would be the third country to offer military support to Russia after Iran, which has supplied attack drones, and North Korea, which has supplied soldiers, according to American and South Korean officials. China has provided strong diplomatic support for Russia since it launched its full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022. Beijing has also offered an economic lifeline through the trade in energy and consumer goods.

Zelenskyy said a clash with Chinese soldiers occurred near the villages of Tarasivka and Bilohorivka in

Donetsk, where six Chinese military personnel engaged Ukrainian troops. Two Chinese were taken prisoner, Zelenskyy said.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Andrii Sybiha, said his ministry summoned China's chargé d'affaires to demand an explanation, saying on X that "Chinese citizens fighting as part of Russia's invasion army in Ukraine puts into question China's declared stance for peace and undermines Beijing's credibility as a responsible permanent member of the U.N. Security Council." □



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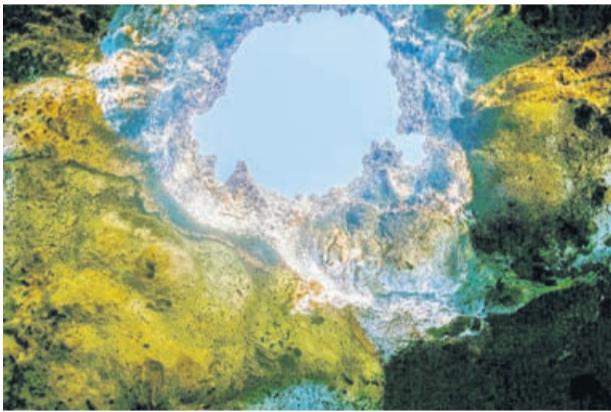
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Duration	7 Days	14 Days
Price	\$30	\$50



Today is going to be a good day

(Oranjestad)—Here's why: Aruba Today collected some things to do **BEYOND** the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. **Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.**

Nature Calls



The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. The guided tours are even free of charge. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website www.arubanationalpark.org

Philip's Animal Garden

To stay with the animals, let's hop to an amazing place. Something different to do, an experience that is to be enjoyed by people of all ages. Welcome to Philip's Animal Garden. We are not talking about a zoo here, this is actually a sanctuary for all types of creatures, from horses to peacocks, kangaroos to turtles, monkeys, goats, and many, many more different species. The place was founded in 2009 and it is the only organization rescuing and rehabilitat-

ing exotic animals in Aruba, which has resulted in an amazing collection of these animals. They provide a suitable living environment for all the rescued animals. Up until now the owner, Philip, has built this shelter with his own efforts; building all the cages from scratch, designing all structures and welding them with his own bare hands. His goal is to upgrade the facilities to a world-class animal shelter with veterinary care and round-the-clock staffs. With the input from the Aruban community and visitors they provide the best care for these animals. Please check out their website for more information: www.philipsanimalgarden.com.

The Lighthouse



No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light. www.arubalighthouse.com will give you more information.

Kayak in the Mangroves

Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout -as it might get a little windy and rough-, you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. Its fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. There are several compa-

nies that offer kayak tours, we had good experience with The Shack Kayak Tours Aruba, find them on Facebook.

Take an "off-road" sightseeing tour



A must-do activity on the island is for sure taking an off-road sightseeing tour. If you have a rented car, you can drive through the northeastern side of Aruba and explore the natural pools, caves, rock formations and gorgeous view of the Atlantic Ocean. To access most of these sights, like the natural pool (Conchi) and the Guadirikiri and Fontein caves, you must enter through the Arikok National Park and buy a day pass. Then you drive up the rugged road that leads you through the white dunes, caves and along the wind turbines. Other locations, like the Ayo and Casibari Rock formation are situated more in the center of the island, and are free for guests, 24 hours a day.

Go for a shopping spree in the city center



Need a new bathing suit? Head to the city center of Oranjestad, where there is countless of different stores—both high end and more affordable—that can offer you the service you deserve! Local shopping stores often offer a more affordable price, and have a variety of clothes, shoes, bathing suites, purses and more. Along the Royal Plaza strip, there are numerous jewelry stores with great quality jewelry. In the Renaissance mall, you can shop high-end luxury brands, like Dolce & Gabbana, Kate Spade, Louis Vuitton and more.

Around the high-rise hotel area near Palm Beach, the Paseo Herencia Mall contain a variety of shopping stores, restaurants, small food stands and even a movie theater! □



A Nighttime Brunch at Po-Ké Ono Marketplace – A Fresh Take on a Beloved Tradition



This April, Po-Ké Ono is turning brunch on its head with a bold new twist: a nighttime brunch experience at Renaissance Marketplace. On Friday, April 25th, guests are invited to discover Handpicked Favorites, a curated menu that blends the vibrant flavors of Asia and Hawaii into a relaxed and flavorful evening affair.

Unlike the traditional daytime brunch, this special event offers a more refined and intimate experience under the stars. For **\$65**, guests can explore a selection of carefully chosen dishes—each one available to enjoy up to three times. It's a unique approach designed to let you truly savor your favorites, without limits.

To elevate the evening even further, guests can add unlimited Mimosas or opt for Po-Ké Ono's signature **Al-b-no Cocktail Pitcher**, a refreshing white sangria with Asian influences, available for just **\$25**.

This isn't just brunch—it's a celebration of flavor, community, and creativity, set in one of Aruba's most vibrant locations. Whether you're a local foodie or a weekend visitor, this evening event is the perfect way to kick off **King's Day weekend** in style.



Join us:

Date: Friday, April 25th, 2025

Time: 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Location: Po-Ké Ono at Renaissance Marketplace

Reservations: +297 699 3982

Seating is limited, and the experience promises to be one to remember. Secure your spot today and discover why this is not your average brunch—it's Po-Ké Ono, after dark. □



Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Aruba Beach Club Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively



honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors

Mr. Tony & Mrs. Jackie DeMayo from Massapequa Park New York, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Aruba Beach Club Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's beaches.
- Aruba's weather.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- "Friends we have made"
- "Love for Aruba Beach Club Resort"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

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The Aruba Conservation Foundation invites you to another Full Moon Hike!



Come experience the wilderness of Aruba under the glow of the full moon, and witness the island's natural beauty from a different perspective.

Starting at Parke Nacional Arikok's Visitor Center, this hike will take you up Sero Boonchi and Sero Arikok.

Date: Sunday, 13 April 2025

Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Distance: 4.0 km / 2.5 mi

Take Note: Bring a small flashlight with you

Limited spots available, so be quick to register! Call ACF at 585 1234 or e-mail at info@acf.aw for more information. Let's appreciate the beauty of our nature in a respectful and mindful way. □

Birds of Aruba



ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The foundation



publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the following pictures and descriptions from the foundation's Facebook page.

The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful

things start happening in nature.

Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.



Cabochon

In its living form of so much more value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hovering Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory.

English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male)
Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragdkolibrie (mannetje).

Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect.



Article by Etnia Nativa

WhatsApp us 592 2702 and book your Aruban experience!

Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



The evolution of drinking water supply in Aruba

Episode CCXCVIII -298

Our narratives have long emphasized the vital balance required in all that we do, especially on a small island like Aruba. For generations, the Aruban people thrived in a laid-back colonial existence, shaped by a unique blend of cultures. However, the neglect of our cultural heritage and the growing threats to our biodiversity has now reached critical levels.

This platform is dedicated to preserving and rediscovering native traditions, while exploring the true spirit of what it means to be Aruban, and reflecting on our history and identity.

In this episode, we continue to explore the historical evolution of drinking water on the island.

As explained in the previous episode, with the establishment of the oil refinery, finding a solution for the necessary supply of drinking water became crucial. Initially, it was decided to import drinking water from the United States. However, this soon proved insufficient, prompting the next phase in addressing the island's water needs. The plan was to install a distilled water plant and a distribution system, which had already been successfully implemented on the neighboring island of Curaçao (Episode 216: Drinking Water in Aruba). Alongside the economic boom of that era, seawater desalination became the most important source of drinking water production.

It was then that the distillation plant and storage tanks were built in Balashi, with subsequent expansions ensuring that the entire island could be supplied with water. Thanks to this process, Aruba became an innovator in the water supply and distribution sector: pure, distilled seawater could reach every home through an urban distribution center, covering both drinking and domestic water needs. A year later, the evaporators began operating, first supplying Oranjestad and then San Nicolas.

The initial capacity of the storage tanks was soon increased to maintain constant pressure in the distribution lines during peak hours, with water towers built in Oranjestad and San Nicolas in 1939.



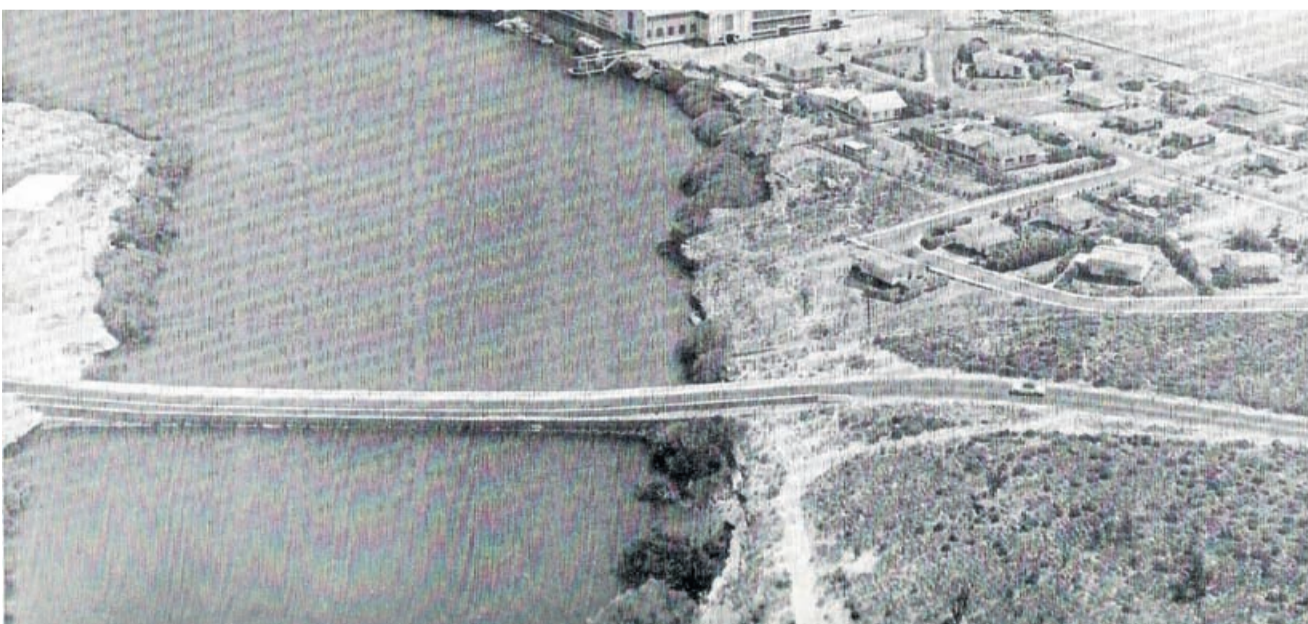
At that time, in the interior of the island, houses were widely dispersed, and as the cost of expanding pipes was very high, this had to happen gradually over the years. The districts of Santa Cruz, Noord-Paadera, Pos Chiquito, Savaneta, Brasil, Papillon, Santa Martha, Siribana, and Cashero were part of a main pipeline.

Today, drinking water is produced and distributed by WEB Aruba NV. The company pumps large volumes of water into storage tanks, which serve as buffers and are strategically located at high points across the island. The water is then pumped into the distribution system through a main header. WEB Aruba NV has been providing water to the island since 1932, using a combination of Multi-Stage Flash Distillation and Seawater Reverse Osmosis to desalinate it.

In 1956, construction began on the massive Balashi seawater distillery. The

facility cost 20 million Antillean guilders and was among the largest in the world. It also began generating electricity that same year. The distillery was officially opened by Finance Minister Juan E. Yrausquin in 1958. The factory produced its first batch of water just in time, as the old facility was unable to meet demand, which had to be rationed that year to a daily supply.

Over the course of ten years, from 1950 to 1960, daily production increased from 1,500 cubic meters to 10,000 cubic meters. The cost per cubic meter decreased, storage capacity expanded from 6,500 cubic meters to 80,000, and the number of homes served grew from 4,500 to 10,220. Only four homes in remote areas, such as one near West Point Lighthouse, were unserved. During this period, Aruba had the highest percentage of water connections in the world. Additionally, the length of the distribution system tripled. □



If you really enjoyed reading our stories and are interested in interacting and learning more about our island's true identity, there is no better choice than Etnia Nativa—the only 'living museum of its kind in the Caribbean.' It's a fascinating opportunity, a trendsetter since 1994, and a co-founder of Islands National Park, the Archaeological Museum Aruba, and numerous Artisan Foundations, among others. Etnia Nativa shares valuable knowledge and connects you with the ancient spirit and soul of the island. We recommend booking a visit via WhatsApp +297 592 2702, as visits are private and by appointment only. You can also reach us at etnianativa03@gmail.com

Ever heard of the cah'i orgel?

A key instrument in Aruban folklore music

(Oranjestad)—The cah'i orgel music box is an important and unique instrument that is used on the ABC islands in the Dutch Caribbean. This instrument is a staple in our folklore music, and its significance in the traditions of Aruba has and continues to bring together the old and young.

The origin of the cah'i orgel is said to have come from Europe around 150 years ago. A cross breed between the barrel piano and the organ, the most popular stories said that the instrument came from either England or Germany, but made its way to Italy down to Venezuela, where in 1881, Mr. Horatio Sprock (1866-1949) from Curacao was first introduced to it. After that, Sprock made his own cah'i orgel "Josefina",

and successfully debuted it on the streets of Barquisimeto. Back in Curacao, he started his own cah'i orgel business along with his brother Luis. In Aruba, it is said that the cah'i orgel was introduced by Rufo Wever, who later in his career became one of the composers for the Aruban national anthem.

Rufo Wever was a young musician in 1937 when he established his own cah'i orgel business on the island. Before that he experimented with his uncle's cah'i orgel, and he over the years he learned to build and repair the instrument. In fact, he was incredibly skilled in this, and he was one of the few to have recognized from the start that the cah'i orgel is an instrument that needs preserving.

As mentioned, the cah'i orgel is a music box. made from mahogany wood, it contains a cylinder with a maximum of eight music pieces. By rotating the lever on the front side of the box, the cah'i orgel produces music similar to that of a piano, and is accompanied often by someone else playing the "wiri", a percussion instrument made out of steel and reminiscent to the Spanish guiro. Back then, you would often also find someone playing the triangle alongside the cah'i orgel and wiri. In Aruba, the cah'i orgel and wiri is used for traditional music genres, such as the Aruban waltz, tumba, mazurka and more.

Fun fact: another name for the cah'i orgel is the "tingilingi box." □



Source: "E Cilinder Magico entre Aruba y Curaçao" by

Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé, Herta Parabirsing-Balentina and Nidia Rosaria-Wallé.

Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.

Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can

be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster



of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

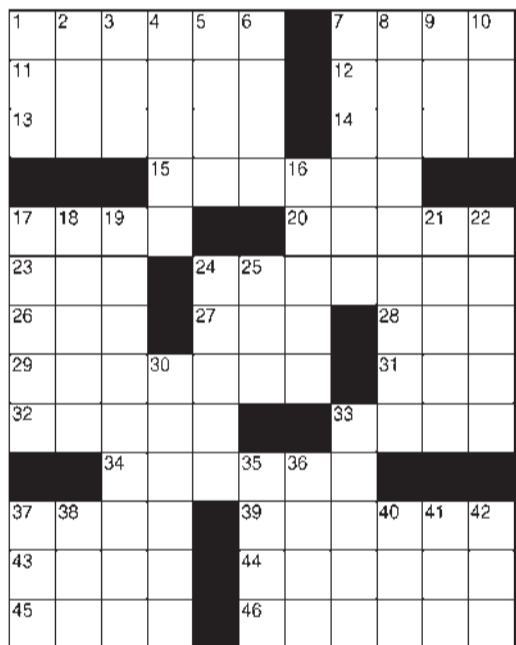
ACROSS

- 1 Denali setting
7 Invites
11 Door
12 Debt reminder
13 Idaho export
14 Wee
15 Stops, as rain
17 Bad writer
20 Stratum
23 "That's disgusting!"
24 Like many roads
26 Avril follower
27 Drake's music
28 Gene messenger
29 Collapse inward
31 Failure
32 Car sticker
33 Tag sale words
34 Finally
37 Tabloid staple
39 Voter's page
43 Assistant
44 Pal of George and Jerry
45 Fall short of

46 Checked out

DOWN

- 1 Phone download
2 John, to Ringo
3 Gallery fill
4 Celery serving
5 Designer Spade
6 Oodles
7 Real
8 Boat-building places
9 Family
10 Pig's place
16 Incline
17 Like a greenhouse
18 Athlete's optimal effort
19 They can be tapped to pay
21 Tedium
22 Goes through
24 Fantasy villain
25 Gum mass
30 Coffee bar orders
33 Travel aid
35 Aid illegally
36 Mall event
37 Block up
38 Clock numeral
40 Turned on
41 Count starter
42 TV's "— Lasso"



4-12

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-12

CRYPTOQUOTE

VQJA NLATA IMC M NLSQH
JMFFAZ CETSQH ILAQ NLA IVTFZ
IMC ITSNSQH BATCAC FSRA
KVXTC MQZ PSQA. — AFFM
WSNOHATMFZ

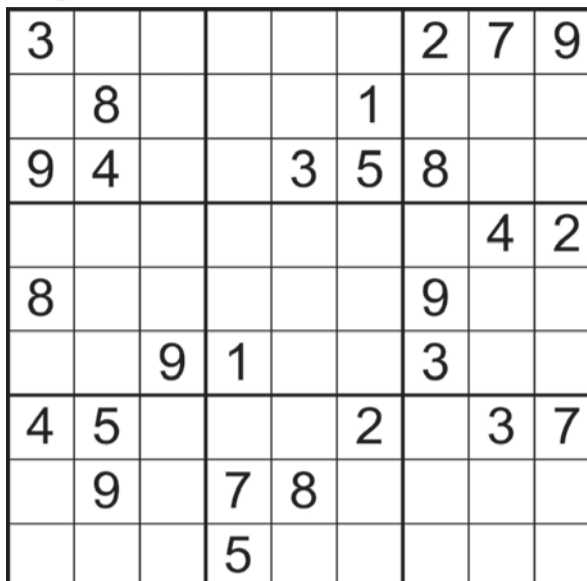
Cryptoquote: YOU MISS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF THE SHOTS YOU DON'T TAKE. — WAYNE GRETZKY



SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★

4/9

Answer to previous puzzle

4	8	2	9	5	3	6	1	7
1	7	5	6	2	8	4	3	9
6	3	9	7	4	1	2	5	8
3	9	6	5	1	4	7	8	2
5	4	7	2	8	6	3	9	1
8	2	1	3	9	7	5	4	6
9	1	3	4	7	2	8	6	5
2	6	8	1	3	5	9	7	4
7	5	4	8	6	9	1	2	3

Difficulty: ★★

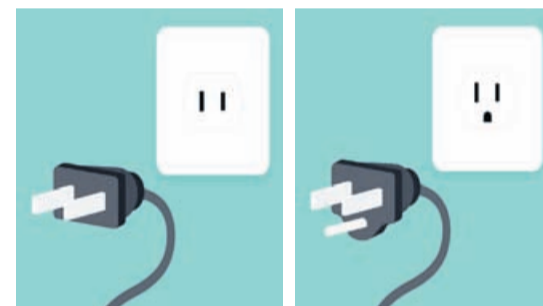
4/8

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



Microsoft workers fired after protest

By **MATT O'BRIEN**
AP Technology Writer

Microsoft has fired two employees who interrupted the company's 50th anniversary celebration to protest its work supplying artificial intelligence technology to the Israeli military, according to a group representing the workers. Microsoft accused one of the workers in a termination letter Monday of misconduct "designed to gain notoriety and cause maximum disruption to this highly anticipated event." □

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Imsan 24 hours
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Sta. Cruz: Tel.585 8028

San Nicolas:

San Lucas:Tel.584 5119

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
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EMERGENCY

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Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

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American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
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FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
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Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Here's what to know about nations considering the 1st global tax on emissions for shipping

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT
Associated Press

Nations are trying to reach an agreement to charge commercial vessels a fee for their emissions in what would effectively be the world's first global carbon tax. The International Maritime Organization, which regulates international shipping, set a target for the sector



Ships are loaded at the Port of Los Angeles Wednesday, April 2, 2025, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by about 2050, and committed to ensuring that fuels with zero or near-zero emissions are used more widely. Its Marine Environment Protection Committee meets Monday through Friday in London.

The committee, comprised of IMO member states, is working to approve proposed new global regulations to put a price on maritime greenhouse gas emissions and to set a marine fuel standard to phase in cleaner fuels.

The measures are more than climate aspirations they will become mandatory for ships operating globally, said IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez, who thinks the industry must do more to cut carbon pollution. The committee will "set the course for a net-zero future for the maritime sector," he told The Associated Press in a statement Thursday.

The future of clean shipping hangs in the balance, said Emma Fenton, senior director for climate diplomacy at a U.K.-based climate change nonprofit, Opportunity Green. Fenton said a high price, simple flat-rate levy on shipping's

greenhouse gas emissions is the only way to decarbonize the industry equitably.

"If an agreement is reached, it would represent a huge moment of solidarity in the fight to tackle climate change," Fenton said.

"For the first time, we will have, hopefully, an effective global framework tackling this international issue. Most emissions are tackled domestically." Here's what to know:

What are the talks about?

Emissions from shipping have increased over the last decade to about 3% of the global total according to the United Nations as vessels have gotten much bigger, delivering more cargo per trip and using immense amounts of fuel oil.

Maritime nations agreed in 2023 to slash emissions from the shipping industry, though several experts and nations were critical of the deal since it did not set 2050 as a hard date. The IMO is now in the process of adopting regulations to achieve the goals agreed to in 2023.

Why are they important to the world?

A simple climate levy

paired with a green fuel standard would help narrow the price gap between fossil fuels and green fuels, such as hydrogen, methanol and ammonia, according to the Global Maritime Forum, a nonprofit that works closely with the industry.

Shipping relies heavily on fossil fuels and the sector won't transition off those on its own, said Jesse Fahnestock, who leads the forum's decarbonization work. And it will take time to build up a supply of e-fuels based on renewable electricity so investments need to happen now, he added.

Most ships today run on heavy fuel oil, releasing carbon dioxide and other pollutants as it's burned. Dominguez has said that major decarbonizing requires an overhaul of shipping fuel.

The Clean Shipping Coalition is calling on governments to commit to a high price on all ship emissions and a strong fuel standard. The alliance of environmental non-profits is also urging countries to revise the IMO's tool for measuring a ship's carbon intensity, to quantify and raise their efficiency transpar-

ently and drive down the amount of fuel burned long-term.

What is the status of the negotiations?

Led by Pacific island nations, whose very existence is threatened by climate change, more than 60 countries support a flat levy per metric ton of emissions to reach net zero in a fair way. The shipping industry supports a fee, too. The International Chamber of Shipping represents over 80% of the world's merchant fleet. Its secretary general, Guy Platten, said a pricing mechanism for maritime emissions is a pragmatic solution and the most effective way to incentivize a rapid energy transition in shipping.

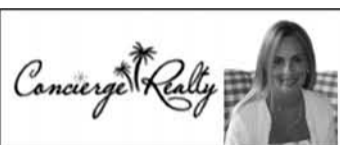
Some countries, notably China, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and South Africa, want a credit trading model instead of a fixed levy, where ships get credits for staying under their emissions target and ships purchase credits if they go over.

Other countries want a compromise between the two models.

Some fear that anything short of a universal levy would jeopardize climate goals and allow wealthier ship owners to buy compliance while continuing to pollute. Ambassador Albon Ishoda, Marshall Islands' special envoy for maritime decarbonization, said IMO's climate targets are "meaningless" without the levy. Revenue from a levy could be used to help developing countries transition to greener shipping, so they aren't left behind with dirty fuels and old ships.

What's expected by the end of the meeting?

If the committee agrees and finalizes text for the regulations, they could be formally adopted in October and take effect in 2027. That could send a powerful signal that the green transition is happening and that it's possible for a global industry, according to the IMO. □



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2 Bed WK 52 Ocean View \$65,500
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Rory McIlroy and hopes for a Masters green jacket lie with his willingness to suffer heartache

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Rory McIlroy had every reason to believe the Masters would be the first major he won. He was 21 with no scar tissue, only brown, curly locks spilling out of his cap. And most importantly that Sunday afternoon in 2011, he had a four-shot lead.

Now it's the only major he hasn't won. That's been the chatter chasing McIlroy down Magnolia Lane for the last 11 years. And it's never been louder.

Is this the year he joins the most elite club in golf with the career Grand Slam?

"It's noise," McIlroy said Tuesday at Augusta National. "It's just trying to block out that noise as much as possible. I need to treat this tournament like all the other tournaments that I play throughout the year." Right.

"Look, I understand the narrative and the noise, and there's a lot of anticipation and buildup coming into this tournament each and every year," he said. "But I just have to keep my head down and focus on my job."

He has tried playing the week before the Masters. He has taken off the week before, sometimes three weeks before. Nothing seems to work. This year



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, hits from the 12th tee during a practice round at the Masters golf tournament, Tuesday, April 8, 2025, in Augusta, Ga.

Associated Press

brings something new winning. For the first time, McIlroy comes to Augusta National having won twice this season, both against strong fields on famous courses (Pebble Beach and TPC Sawgrass).

Is this the year?

History is not on his side. Only five players have the career Grand Slam of all four professional majors. Only three of them knew what they were playing for Gary Player (1965), Jack Nicklaus (1966) and Tiger Woods (2000).

None of them had to wait longer than three years to

get the final leg.

Arnold Palmer, who cooked up the notion of the modern Grand Slam in 1960, played the PGA Championship 34 times without ever winning to complete the slam. Tom Watson had 24 cracks at the PGA Championship and ended his career one leg short of a slam.

Phil Mickelson gets one more try at the U.S. Open. McIlroy is playing the Masters for the 17th time. Only one player has made more appearances before finally wearing the green jacket Sergio Garcia on his 19th try.

Perhaps more surprising than McIlroy not already being a Masters champion is how few chances he has had since he lost that four-shot lead with an 80 in the final round in 2011.

He was runner-up in 2022, but that was the year Scottie Scheffler blew everyone away and walked up the 18th fairway with a five-shot lead. He was in the last group with Patrick Reed in 2018 and had practically all of Augusta National throwing their support behind him. McIlroy shot 74. Reed won the Masters.

No, this is not just another

tournament, and McIlroy knows it.

When he casually mentioned his elbow had been bothering him at the Houston Open two weeks ago, speculation began that it was a ploy to take pressure off himself.

One of the websites tracking private planes noticed McIlroy's plane had gone to Augusta on the way home from Houston. Based on the flight pattern, it almost looked as though McIlroy was going to Florida when he told the pilot, "Hang on, veer left." Or it could have been the weather.

McIlroy knows it's important because he thinks back to the years when perhaps he didn't treat the Masters or any other major with enough importance. Too many expectations. Too many close calls.

Too much angst.

He was leaving The Players Championship after his playoff victory when he stopped by the Golf Channel set for an interview and said of those years of mediocrity, "You have to be willing to get your heart broken, and I think I went through a few years of my career where I wasn't willing to put myself out there. But I feel like I've figured it out." □

Wayne Gretzky says he has 'no political power' over the president or prime minister

TORONTO (AP) — Retired NHL great Wayne Gretzky downplayed his influence on Donald Trump in his first public comments since the U.S. president began his second term and began making references to making Canada the 51st state. On a radio show Monday hosted by Ben Mulroney, son of former conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Gretzky never used Trump's name and was never asked about Trump's tariffs and trade war or the 51st state comments. Mulroney instead asked Gretzky if it registered with him that others attempt to use his name to further their agendas.

"I don't worry about those kind of things because you can't make everybody happy," Gretzky said on the show on AM-640 in Toronto. "But, trust me, I have no

political power with the prime minister or the president. That's between those two guys, and that's why you hold elections and that's why people get to do what they want to do and say what they want to say. But trust me I have no pull or power with either the prime minister or the president."

Some Canadians have openly wondered why Gretzky doesn't speak out against Trump's comments and they have noted his relationship with the Republican president dates back some years.

Asked about having his NHL career goals record broken by Alex Ovechkin, a Russian player, Gretzky also brushed that aside and said he and his teammates never talked about politics during his playing days. □



Former NHL player Wayne Gretzky speaking during a press conference after an NHL hockey game in which Washington Capitals Alex Ovechkin tied Gretzky's NHL career goals record of 894th goals, Friday, April 4, 2025, in Washington.

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GO-KART RENTALS



Nuggets fire coach Malone and won't extend GM Booth in stunning move as postseason looms

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

Michael Malone coached the Denver Nuggets to the NBA title in 2023. He has them set to make the post-season for a seventh consecutive year. Even amid a four-game slide, they're still in position to have home-court advantage in Round 1.

And he's gone with three games left an unprecedented move for a club bound for the postseason. The Nuggets fired Malone on Tuesday, a stunning move that comes with less than a week in the regular season. Also out: general manager Calvin Booth, whose contract will not be renewed. The Nuggets said David Adelman will be the coach for the remainder of the season.

Josh Kroenke, the vice chairman of Kroenke Sports and Entertainment, which owns the Nuggets, said "it is with no pleasure" that the team made the change at coach.

"This decision was not made lightly and was evaluated very carefully, and we do it only with the intention of giving our group the best chance at competing for the 2025 NBA championship and delivering another title to Denver and our fans everywhere," Kroenke said. There's never been an instance in NBA history of a team officially changing coaches with three games left and going to the post-season; the Nuggets aren't in the playoffs yet but are assured of a play-in berth at worst. The latest in-season change for a playoff team before now was in 1983, when Larry Brown left the New Jersey Nets with six games left to take over at the University of Kansas.



Denver Nuggets head coach Michael Malone gestures during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Golden State Warriors, Friday, April 4, 2025, in San Francisco.

Associated Press

The Nuggets are 47-32 this season but are part of a logjam of teams fighting for home-court advantage in Round 1 of the playoffs. Denver won the title in 2023 and lost a Game 7 at home in the Western Conference semifinals a year ago to Minnesota.

Malone pointed the finger at himself after the most recent loss, a 125-120 defeat to Indiana on Sunday.

"I'll start with me: We've lost four games in a row and I'm never going to this guy, that-guy. How about me, as a head coach, not doing my job to the best of my ability," Malone said. "We haven't lost four in a row in a long time."

It's really easy to be together and say 'family' when you win, but when you're losing games, can you stay together?"

The slide comes despite Nuggets star Nikola Jokic a winner of three of the last four NBA MVP awards

having a historic season, averaging 30 points, 12.8 rebounds and 10.2 assists per game.

But even that wasn't good enough for Denver to enter the final week of the season certain of having home court in Round 1.

After that loss to the Pacers, Jokic was asked his biggest concern with the team right now.

"I don't know."

Maybe we just, maybe we just ... I don't know, actually," Jokic said.

The Nuggets are hoping a shakeup might provide the answer.

Malone had the fourth-longest tenure of any active NBA coach, behind San Antonio's Gregg Popovich, Miami's Erik Spoelstra and Golden State's Steve Kerr. Malone won 471 regular-season games in Denver, 39 more than Doug Moe for the franchise's all-time coaching lead.

"While the timing of this

decision is unfortunate, as Coach Malone helped build the foundation of our now championship level program, it is a necessary step to allow us to compete at the highest level right now. Championship level standards and expectations remain in place for the current season, and as we look to the future, we look forward to building on the foundations laid by Coach Malone over his record-breaking 10-year career in Denver," Kroenke said. Malone had consistent success in Denver. The Nuggets finished with losing records in his first two seasons and posted winning records in his next eight years with the club.

This season's postseason appearance will be the team's seventh in a row; it has not clinched a playoff berth yet this season but is assured of finishing no worse than in the play-in tournament. Starting with

the first playoff appearance under Malone in 2019, the Nuggets got out of the first round six times in seven chances. They made the Western Conference finals in the Walt Disney World bubble in 2020 and then rolled to the championship by winning 16 of 20 playoff games in 2023.

It is the second time in the last two weeks that a post-season-bound team has fired a coach. Memphis another team assured of at least a play-in spot dismissed Taylor Jenkins late last month with nine games left in the season, replacing him with Tuomas Iisalo on an interim basis.

The Nets parted ways with Brown (officially he resigned) with six games left in 1982-83, and the Nets now in Brooklyn replaced Kenny Atkinson with Jacque Vaughn for the final 10 games of the 2019-20 "bubble" season. The 1983 Nets and 2020 Nets went a combined 0-6 in playoff games after the coaching changes; time will tell what happens with the Grizzlies and Nuggets this year.

Booth came to Denver in 2017 as an assistant general manager and was promoted to GM in July 2020. He signed his most recent contract with the club in 2022.

Kroenke credited Booth "for helping put the final pieces in place for the roster that delivered Denver and our fans their first NBA championship."

"Calvin's knowledge of the game, his passion for scouting, and his long history as a player and executive in the NBA helped lift our organization to new heights which we will continue moving forward," Kroenke said. □